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May 31, 2006

The Honorable Matt Blunt
Governor, State of Missouri
State Capitol – Room 216-218
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear Governor Blunt:

I am in receipt of your letter indicating your intention to sign into law Senate Bill 1014 which would create a new requirement for Missouri voters to present a government issued photo identification card before being allowed to vote.

While I share your interest in increasing voter confidence, this new requirement will create a significant new hurdle to voting for up to 170,000 legitimate Missouri voters who do not currently possess a state-issued drivers or non-drivers license.

For those Missourians, in order to avoid being forced to cast a provisional ballot (which is not guaranteed to count even if cast in the proper polling place) and ensure their vote will be counted, they must obtain a government issued photo ID before the November election.

As you are aware, although SB 1014 mandates that a number of new activities be performed by the Secretary of State's office, the Department of Revenue and local county clerks and election authorities, no money was appropriated by the legislature to cover the costs of implementing these new requirements.

The Secretary of State's office is required, immediately upon your signing of the bill, to begin a public awareness campaign to notify voters of the new ID requirement.

In addition, our office must pay to prepare, print and distribute thousands of additional provisional ballot envelopes to election authorities to ensure that those without the new ID are not denied the right to vote. The estimated cost for our office to comply with these new requirements is \$3.5 million. A detailed breakdown of those costs is included in the fiscal notes submitted by our office.

The Department of Revenue also submitted a fiscal note detailing the costs associated with providing IDs to a portion of those eligible Missouri voters who do not now possess one. Those costs are estimated to be \$2 million.

A number of county clerks and local election authorities also submitted fiscal impact statements reflecting the additional cost imposed on them to comply with this new state mandate. The fiscal note indicates a cost of \$1.0 million for the 12 out of 116 election authorities who provided this information. Based on these partial estimates, our office approximates that the total cost to all election authorities will reach \$6 million. As you know, the Hancock Amendment to the Missouri Constitution requires the state to pay the costs associated when newly mandated activities, such as those required by this proposal, are imposed on local governments.

In order to properly implement this proposal in time for the upcoming elections, an immediate appropriation of funds is required.

While I cannot speak for the Department of Revenue's ability to absorb the additional costs it will incur to properly implement this measure, I can assure you that the office of the Secretary of State does not have the ability to absorb these added costs without a corresponding appropriation. Waiting to reimburse our office through the state's supplemental budget process, as some have suggested, is not the most responsible option for two reasons. First, the Secretary of State's entire general revenue appropriation for expense and equipment of \$2.3 million would not cover the additional costs of \$3.5 million needed to properly implement the new mandates required by SB 1014.

Second, spending the entire general revenue budget for expense and equipment on this new activity would be done at the expense of meeting our constitutional and statutory duties. Taking this step would jeopardize all the other important services our office provides to Missouri taxpayers, including those of the Business Services Division, Securities Division, Elections Division, State Archives, State Library and administration.

To achieve the objectives stated in your May 12, 2006, letter of removing "impediments to obtaining photo IDs" and to "implement an aggressive program to provide photo IDs," it is vital for these efforts to be adequately funded. Failure to do so, or making only a half-hearted effort, not only jeopardizes the integrity of our elections, but also puts the constitutional voting rights of up to 170,000 legitimate Missouri voters – primarily seniors, disabled and poor – at risk.

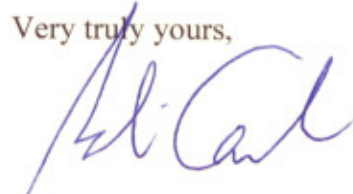
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To avoid this unacceptable situation, I ask that you immediately act to appropriate the funds needed to properly implement the requirements of SB 1014. Because it failed to include funding for this measure in the FY 2007 budget, **I urge you to call back the General Assembly into a special session and request that they fund this measure before it goes into effect in the November 2006 election.**

Ensuring the integrity of and confidence in our elections requires both preventing fraud and protecting the voting rights of legitimate voters. I hope that you will show your commitment to both of these fundamental ideals of our democracy and act quickly to fund this new law. Missouri voters expect and deserve no less.

I look forward to your prompt attention to this matter. If you have any questions, or if I can be of any assistance, please contact me at 573-751-1880.

Very truly yours,



Robin Carnahan
Secretary of State

RC/mp